

MINUTES OF THE
MARICOPA ASSOCIATION OF GOVERNMENTS
TELECOMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY GROUP

February 25, 1999
MAG Office
302 North First Avenue
Phoenix, Arizona

MEMBERS ATTENDING

Debbie Kohn, Avondale, Chairperson	Jenny Sheppard for Jim Hull, Mesa
Sandra Finkbeiner, Cave Creek	Ralph Spencer for Sandy Teetsel, Peoria
David Spitzer for Bill Mitchell, Chandler	Greg Binder, Phoenix
Peter Putterman, Fountain Hills	Jamie Oman-Saltmarsh, Scottsdale
*Glenn Keough, Gilbert	John Laue, Tempe
*Steve Jones, Glendale	*Ralph Velez, Tolleson
*Jack Blonski, Goodyear	Sabra Mousavi, ADOT
*Horatio Skeete, Litchfield Park	Eddie Caine, RPTA
Cary Parker for Danica Bunjevic, Maricopa County	

*Members neither present nor represented by proxy

OTHERS PRESENT

Betsy Wise, Carefree	Kevin Lundholm, Norstan
Mark Johnson, Guadalupe	Don Adkisson, Phoenix
Mark Goldstein, IRC	Armando Gonzales, South Mountain
Harry Wolfe, MAG	Community College
Heidi Pahl, MAG	David Deans, U.S. West
Audrey Skidmore, MAG	

1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:03a.m. by Jamie Oman-Saltmarsh. Debbie Kohn and Kevin Lundholm attended the meeting by telephone conference.

2. Approval of January 28, 1999 and February 17, 1999 Meeting Minutes

Peter Putterman made a correction to the February 17th meeting minutes, by correcting the third to last paragraph in section two of the minutes. This paragraph should read, "Peter Putterman stated that a jurisdiction's ability to support ongoing expenses after the pilot project period should not be a criteria for equipment distribution." It was moved by Peter Putterman, seconded by Cary Parker and unanimously recommended to approve the January 28, 1999 and February 17, 1999 meeting minutes as amended.

3. Announcements

Mark Goldstein announced that the next Arizona Telecommunications and Information Council (ATIC) meeting is on March 18th, 1999, at the Salt River Project (SRP) Public Administration Building from 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. At this meeting, regulatory issues with US West will be discussed.

Mark Goldstein announced that the May 13th, 1999, ATIC meeting will cover Advanced Wireless Technologies. He stated that ATIC meetings are well attended and that very interesting telecommunication issues are discussed at these meetings.

Mr. Goldstein also announced that the Arizona Executive Leadership Forum will be held on April 6-7, 1999 at the Phoenix Civic Plaza. He said, for more information visit their website at www.govtech.net.

Eddie Caine announced that House Bill 2151 is going to the house next week. This bill is proposed legislation for the alternate commute grant program, where certain agencies are encouraging employers to provide the most effective rideshare incentives to employees.

Mark Goldstein mentioned that another group has formed to discuss policy issues with telecommunications. This group is pushing legislation to remove any in kind services on the three basic channels: public, education and government access or public safety. This is Senate Bill 1272.

Armando Gonzales, Associate Dean of Instruction at South Mountain Community College (SMCC) introduced himself to the MAGTAG. Mr. Gonzales stated that SMCC is a member of a consortium of 13 universities. Hispanic Education Technology System (HETS) has satellite based equipment for videoconferencing and would be interested in partnership opportunities with MAG on the Videoconferencing Project. Mr. Gonzales reported that SMCC is linked to several other colleges.

4. Funding for Potential Telecommunications Projects

Harry Wolfe stated that the MAG Telecommunications Advisory Group (TAG) held a Telephonic Committee meeting to review the three year staff option for Telecommunications Projects. Mr. Wolfe stated that these projects are being forwarded to the Transportation Review Committee (TRC) for consideration for inclusion in the five year transportation improvement program (TIP). He stated that at the meeting, support was expressed for the projects and the priorities of the projects. Mr. Wolfe reported that these projects would be forwarded to MAG Management Committee and to MAG Regional Council for consideration and potential approval.

Mr. Wolfe reviewed the seven projects that were prioritized: 1.Small Town Connections, 2.Facility Upgrades, 3.Operating Expenses, 4.Teleconferencing Training and Marketing, 5.Outreach to Under served Populations, 6. Telecommuting Training and Marketing, and 7. Additional sites for member agencies.

Mr. Wolfe noted that the facilities upgrade project was unlikely to receive federal funding from transportation sources. He stated that small town connections are so important that MAG will examine using alternative funds to support the project.

Mr. Wolfe reported that MAG is looking at additional sources of funding, such as the

Telecommunications and Information Infrastructure Assistance Program (TIIAP) grant. He reported that the due date for this grant is March 11, 1999. Harry Wolfe noted that Pima Community College received funding from this grant last year.

Mr. Wolfe mentioned that Dennis Middlestat from Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) was supportive of the Videoconferencing Project.

5. MAG Videoconferencing Status Report

Harry Wolfe stated that as part of the requirements phase the consultant is making site visits to each member agency to identify potential videoconferencing applications and inventory facilities that might be suitable to use for videoconferencing. Mr. Wolfe introduced Kevin Lundholm from Norstan who provided a status report.

Kevin Lundholm said that he had visited 14 sites, and that 24 sites had been visited to date. Mr. Lundholm noted the similarities among the cities stating that most cities had concerns with the funding, videoconferencing service and support, and the lack of space.

Kevin Lundholm stated that there is no single infrastructure that links all the member agencies. He said that because there is no one common transport that we can leverage to reduce our expenses, ISDN is a strong possibility. Mr. Lundholm provided a general overview of potential videoconferencing costs. Harry Wolfe indicated that after the consultant had an opportunity to document assumptions cost estimates would be developed.

Kevin Lundholm stated that to try to save money, Norstan is looking at ways to use resources that are already available. For example, the City of Scottsdale just purchased a multipoint bridge and Mr. Lundholm noted that we might leverage existing infrastructure to support the MAG Videoconferencing Project.

Mr. Lundholm also noted that the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) is about to enter into their own videoconferencing pilot project. He noted that ADOT does not plan to purchase a bridge at this time and that ADOT might be willing to use the MAG project potential bridge. Mr. Lundholm said this could be a revenue resource.

Kevin Lundholm reported that he has not spoken with an Arizona State University (ASU) representative yet, but that ASU is video enabled and has infrastructure in place for videoconferencing. Mr. Lundholm noted that MAG may have an opportunity to partner with ASU for possible bridge and service support.

Kevin Lundholm stated that MAG could leverage ASU Internet service to allow for connectivity to sites that do not have ISDN. He stated that by doing this they could take advantage of possible lower transport tariffs. In addition, he noted that leveraging funding for Internet access would help pay for the videoconferencing network.

Mr. Lundholm mentioned that each city is enthusiastic about the videoconferencing program and would like equipment for the project.

Debbie Kohn asked if other community colleges have the same videoconferencing setup as SMCC. Mr. Gonzales replied not at this time. Ms. Kohn noted that the colleges could be of help to smaller

communities.

Mark Goldstein announced that Rio Salado College has a strong distance learning program and therefore they could be interested in videoconferencing.

Mr. Lundholm said that in his experience, community colleges tend to run their equipment all day for teaching classes.

Eddie Caine asked if the scope of work for the consultant included interviews with organizations outside member agencies. Harry Wolfe stated that in the scope of work the consultant is required to check on compatibility between named agencies and MAG. He further stated that a phone inventory with these agencies will be conducted.

Mr. Lundholm stated that he intended for the draft project plan to be completed by March 16, 1999. He reported that the draft plan would include such things as: site drawings, peripherals, room changes, and equipment needed. He hoped that the entire project would be completed by the last day of April, 1999.

6. Vendor Demonstration of Videoconferencing Equipment

David Deans commented that he was approached by a videoconferencing vendor who was drafting a letter to MAG leadership which raised concerns about a potential conflict of interest with Norstan being selecting as a vendor for the project.

Kevin Lundholm responded that the videoconferencing selection would be made with the lowest cost, highest value outlook. Mr. Lundholm indicated that Norstan would state what the equipment should look like and what type of specialty features it should have. He said the manufacturers that meet those requirements would then be invited to demonstrate their equipment to MAG members in a trade show atmosphere.

To ensure no conflict of interest, the Request for Proposal required consultants to submit letters supporting their ability to be impartial. Also, in the Videoconferencing Proposer presentations held at MAG, consultants were asked to state how they could ensure no conflict of interest as they developed their recommendations for the project. In addition, MAG mailed a letter to member agencies on communication with videoconferencing vendors, stating that the methodology for this project is first to determine videoconferencing performance needs and then to invite vendors who best meet those needs to a vendor trade show. It was noted that the purchase of equipment would be done through a separate procurement process. Harry Wolfe stated that MAGTAG members could refer vendor contacts to MAG or Norstan if they wished.

Mr. Wolfe and Debbie Kohn thanked David Deans for notifying MAGTAG of the draft letter. It was suggested that vendors first speak to Harry Wolfe or Kevin Lundholm before speaking to individual jurisdictions. Mr. Wolfe noted that MAG does not want to favor a particular vendor. Ms. Kohn stated that MAGTAG is impartial.

Harry Wolfe stated that after the formal vendor show, the MAGTAG will move forward with equipment recommendations.

Kevin Lundholm mentioned that the target date for the vendor trade show is May 3, 1999. He said there would probably be two hour sessions for each manufacturer to formally present to the MAG group as well as the informal trade show. Mr. Wolfe stated that the location of the videoconferencing trade show is to be determined.

Debbie Kohn announced that the City of Avondale is working with a contractor on building a new conference room that will be used for videoconferencing among other things.

Eddie Caine asked how many points of placement there are in the videoconferencing project. Harry Wolfe stated that MAG will attempt to link all member agencies.

Mr. Gonzales reported that the University of New Mexico has an excellent videoconferencing facility. He mentioned that MAGTAG should come look at one of the videoconferencing sites at SMCC. He stated that he sees the benefit of cities partnering with colleges. Mr. Wolfe noted that we could add SMCC to the agenda of a future MAGTAG meeting.

Mr. Wolfe noted that cities had raised a number of interesting suggestions regarding the use of videoconferencing equipment including communicating with sister cities in other countries.

Peter Putterman commented that smaller communities are short of space. He reported that Fountain Hills, although they have very little space, is still interested in the project and they will do what it takes to integrate videoconferencing into the workplace. Harry Wolfe mentioned that desktop videoconferencing systems might be a solution for smaller communities with little to no space for videoconferencing equipment. Mr. Wolfe noted that he wants to ensure that member agencies evaluate the project first and give it proper consideration.

Betsy Wise stated that Carefree does not have enough personnel to support a videoconferencing system. David Deans, of U.S. West, suggested looking to the community for help, for example volunteers from the community who have an interest in videoconferencing. Peter Putterman said that the medical facility in the Carefree area has a contact person for videoconferencing.

Jamie Oman-Saltmarsh stated that the City of Scottsdale is going to be doing training for their new videoconferencing system. She stated the training will involve three in house days of training for those people who will be the on-call person, two hour training classes for end users, and one week of intensive training for the staff who will be operating the bridge.

Eddie Caine asked what the time line was for the City of Scottsdale videoconferencing training. Ms. Oman-Saltmarsh replied that training for the new Videoconferencing equipment starts in April 1999.

John Laue announced that City of Tempe staff met with the City of Scottsdale staff to investigate a partnership with Scottsdale to use their videoconferencing equipment.

7. Telecommuting Program

Eddie Caine handed out an update on the Governor's Ozone Alert Program. He stated that the Blue Ribbon Committee, the Greater Phoenix Chamber of Commerce, Arizona Public Service, the Governors Office, and others formed a coalition to work on the Ozone Alert Plan to ensure that we do not have exceedance days this summer.

Eddie Caine reported that the goal of the Governor's Ozone Alert Program is to get 10% of the workforce not to go into the office on high alert days.

"Virtual" training for the Governor's Ozone Alert Program will be held on March 18, 1999 at the ASU main campus and three other videoconferenced sites: ASU Downtown Center, ASU East and ASU West.

8. Panel Discussion on Telecommunications

Jamie Oman Saltmarsh explained that MAG hosted a Valley Vision 2025 meeting on Arizona Telecommunications Alternatives, Choices and Solutions on February 4, 1999. Ms. Oman-Saltmarsh reviewed the names of the panelists from the meeting: Carder Hunt, Ivan Johnson, Carl Kunasek and Bill Stack.

Ms. Oman-Saltmarsh stated that the meeting was not very well attended. She indicated that a positive aspect that came out of the meeting was a suggestion to streamline the process for telecommunications integration at a regional level not at a municipal level.

Ms. Oman-Saltmarsh mentioned that some other topics that were discussed included: interconnecting with US WEST, rights of way, Corporation Commission filing, and property rights.

Mark Goldstein stated that the legislator for the panel was difficult to pick. Mr. Goldstein emphasized that several members of the panel expressed concern over government intervention in telecommunications matters that could better be handled by the marketplace; and that the concerns expressed were directed at all levels of government, not just local governments.

Mark Goldstein stated that the output from visioning is supposed to be a white paper but that it is not known who the author of the white paper will be.

9. Date of Next Meetings

The next meeting of the MAGTAG will be held on Thursday March 25, 1999 at the MAG Office Building. The remainder of meetings for 1999 are as follows:

March 25, 1999
April 22, 1999
May 27, 1999
June 24, 1999
July 22, 1999
August 26, 1999
September 23, 1999
October 28, 1999
December 9, 1999

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.